

**ELEMENTS IN ORDER TO DEFINE THE INDICATORS
OF THE INTEGRATION, CONSIDERING THE
CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF AFRICAN AND LATIN-
AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE METROPOLITAN
AREA OF BARCELONA, 1994**

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ABSTRACT

ELEMENTS IN ORDER TO DEFINE THE INDICATORS OF THE INTEGRATION, CONSIDERING THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF AFRICAN AND LATIN-AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF BARCELONA, 1994.

The phenomenon of immigration in Catalonia and in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona is not new. In fact, in the last century, the immigration has been the key of the demographic system of both areas.

The immigrant population from Spain, that was massive in the 60s, has diminished since 1975. Since that date, coinciding with the economical crisis, we can notice the increase of foreign immigrant population. Immigration from Africa and Latin-America is one of the immigration that has suffered a bigger increase. This paper exposes some reflections about the indicators of the integration of migrants. They stem from the analysis of the conditions of life of foreign immigrant population from Africa and Latin-America, realised in 1994 by the Metropolitan Studies Institute of Barcelona.

RÉSUMÉ

POUR UNE DÉFINITION DES INDICATEURS D'INTÉGRATION À PARTIR DES CONDITIONS DE VIE DE LA POPULATION IMMIGRÉE D'ORIGINE AFRICAINE ET LATINO-AMÉRICAINE DANS LA RÉGION MÉTROPOLITAINE DE BARCELONE

L'immigration n'est pas un phénomène nouveau ni en Catalogne ni dans la Région Métropolitaine de Barcelone. En effet l'immigration a confirmé durant le dernier siècle le profil démographique tant de l'une comme de l'autre.

L'immigration d'origine espagnole, massive dans les années soixante s'est ralentie à partir de 1975. Dès lors, en coïncidence avec la crise économique a été enregistré une augmentation de l'immigration étrangère. L'immigration d'origine africaine et latino-américaine est une de celles que a la plus augmentée. Cette communication propose une réflexion sur les indicateurs d'intégration à partir d'une étude sur les conditions de vie de la population étrangère d'origine africaine et latino-américaine dans la Région Métropolitaine de Barcelone, étude réalisée durant l'année 1994 par l'Institut d'Études Métropolitaines de Barcelone.

RESUM

DEFINICIÓ DELS INDICADORS D'INTEGRACIÓ A PARTIR DE LES CONDICIONS DE VIDA DE LA POBLACIÓ IMMIGRADA D'ORIGEN AFRICÀ I LLATINOAMERICÀ A LA REGIÓ METROPOLITANA DE BARCELONA

La immigració no és un fenomen nou ni a Catalunya ni a la Regió Metropolitana de Barcelona. De fet la immigració ha conformat durant el darrer segle el perfil demogràfic tant de l'una com de l'altra.

La immigració d'origen espanyol, que va ser massiva durant els anys seixanta, es va alentir a partir de l'any 1975. Des de llavors, en coincidència amb la crisi econòmica, s'ha enregistrat un augment de la immigració estrangera. La immigració d'origen africà i llatinoamericà és una de les que més han augmentat. Aquest document proposa una reflexió sobre els indicadors d'integració a partir d'un estudi sobre les condicions de vida de la població estrangera d'origen africà i llatinoamericà a la Regió Metropolitana de Barcelona, estudi realitzat l'any 1994 per l'Institut d'Estudis Metropolitans de Barcelona

RESUMEN

DEFINICION DE LOS INDICADORES DE INTEGRACION A PARTIR DE LAS CONDICIONES DE VIDA DE LA POBLACION INMIGRADA DE ORIGEN AFRICANO Y LATINO-AMERICANO EN LA REGION METROPOLITANA DE BARCELONA

La inmigración no es un fenómeno nuevo en Cataluña ni tampoco en la Región Metropolitana de Barcelona. De hecho la inmigración ha configurado, durante el último siglo, el perfil demográfico tanto de una como de la otra.

La inmigración de origen español, masiva en los años sesenta, se ralentizó a partir de 1975. Desde entonces y coincidiendo con la crisis económica se ha registrado un aumento de la inmigración extranjera. La inmigración de origen africano y latinoamericano es de las que más han aumentado. Este documento propone una reflexión sobre los indicadores de integración a partir de un estudio sobre las condiciones de vida de la población extranjera de origen africano y latinoamericano en la Región Metropolitana de Barcelona, estudio realizado en el año 1994 por el Instituto de Estudios Metropolitanos de Barcelona.

ELEMENTS IN ORDER TO DEFINE THE INDICATORS OF THE INTEGRATION, CONSIDERING THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE OF AFRICAN AND LATIN-AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF BARCELONA, 1994 (1).

I.Introduction:

The Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, which represents 7,7% of the catalan territory, contains 129 towns and concentrates 68% of the 6.059.494 inhabitants of Catalonia, according to the last census in 1991. 63,4% out of the 4.117.644 inhabitants registred that year in the Region were born in Catalonia. 34,8% were immigrants from the rest of the Spanish State. And only 1,8% were foreign immigrants. Even if we estimate the number of foreign immigrants as double -taking into account the important subregistration of that collective-, the final amount would still be decisive compared with the immigrant population from Spain. Moreover, this final account would be minimum compared with the foreign population in other european countries. Being its number so reduced, why is the foreign immigration in Catalonia and, particulary, in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona so important?

In contrast with what happens in the whole Spanish State, the phenomenon of immigration in Catalonia is not new. Since the last century, the immigration has been so important, that it must be considered a fundamental key of the demographic system in use in Catalonia. That system was called "Reproduction Catalan system" by the demographer Anna Cabré. Thus, the immigration is the cause of 60,3% of the Catalan demographic growth in the present century. In other words, 3,6% out of the 6 million inhabitants of Catalonia can be considered the direct or indirect result of contemporary immigration. The conjunction of biological reproduction and immigration has been the cause of a notable growth, which explains how Catalonia population has remained stable in relation to mondial population between 1850 (with a 1,37 per 1000) and 1980 (with a 1,34 per 1000). Thus, immigration can be considered a structural phenomenon in Catalonia. This phenomenon has diminished since 1975, coinciding with the economical crisis. Since that date, we can notice the decrease of migratory movements coming from the Spanish state and the increase of foreign immigrant population. Therefore, the importance of foreign immigration in Catalonia is in its systematic nature.

As regards the integration, it's important to notice that the integration of migrant population did not have negative effects on the cultural identity of Catalonia. The periods of the biggest migratory fluency took place in the sixties, during the franquism, characterized by a statal policy, which was hostile to the catalan culture. Nevertheless, these periods became, through the integration process, the beginning of the recuperation and conquest of the political and cultural rights of the catalan nation. The last one was the reinstauration of the political autonomy during the Spanish democratic transition and the process of linguistic normalization.

Thus, we wonder if a process of continuity or rupture is taking place and if the capacity of integration will change in the future. Can the foreign immigration substitute the former spanish immigration? Or, are they two completely different phenomenons? Is there an extension of immigration coming from outside the borders or is there a break in the Catalan demographic system based on immigration?

What requires emphasis is not only the importance of immigration in Catalonia, but also its unequal territorial distribution: the foreign population living in the MAB represented, in 1991, 73% of the total foreign population living in Catalonia. The fact that we are interested in the study of the immigration in the MAB is not surprising if we consider the weight of the immigration in the recent history of Catalonia, the high concentration of the immigrant population in the MAB and its increasing tendency.

II. The context of the Metropolitan inquiry about conditions of life and habits of population.

Since 1984, the "Metropolitan Studies Institute of Barcelona" promote the Metropolitan inquiry. It is a macro-analytic inquiry, with a quinquennial periodicity, about the conditions of life of the MRB population. Its purpose is to provide a better knowledge of territory through the analysis of its social and economical structure,

which will help us to fall upon the management and improvement of the conditions of life of its inhabitants (Subirats, Lozares, 1992). In this context, the conditions of life of foreign immigrant population were perceived as an aspect as important as the conditions of life of the rest of the population to be analysed.

But, precisely, it was one of the main characteristics of foreign immigration in the MAB what frustrated the aim of the inquiry: we are talking about its clandestine situation, which makes them escape from the sampling and refuse any kind of registration. The consequence of this refusal is the limited reliability of the different administrative registers which have tried to enumerate the foreign immigrants and from which there has been an attempt to estimate their stock and their flow, whatever the territorial level is. For that reason, the Metropolitan Studies Institute decided to do a first approximation to the conditions of life of foreign immigrant population using qualitative methods. Given the impossibility to get the immigrant population in the sample of the inquiry, the qualitative method was choosed bearing in mind several points: A qualitative method would serve to compile fundamental aspects of the longitudinal evolution. A first qualitative approximation could precede a quantitative one, thanks to the conceptualization effort made in this investigation. And, finally, that it could be a way to give voice to the social actors of the phenomenon in study; in other words, to the immigrant population.

The main objectives of the investigation were the following:

- 1) To contextualize the conditions of life of immigrant population from Africa and Latin-America in the MAB, within the context of the proposals of the Metropolitan Inquiry of Barcelona.
- 2) To provide new elements, characteristic of the qualitative techniques for a better understanding of the conditions of life of that population and which could be useful for later studies, whatever the technique used.
- 3) Considering the publication of the final report of the investigation, we wanted to pay attention to its possible pedagogic aspects. The purpose was to destroy clichés and prejudices which tend to change the perception of foreign immigrant population and which may lead to racist and xenophobic attitudes.

We decided to study only immigrants from Latin-America and Africa, because in the last years their number had increased much more than the number of people of other origins. We expect the most important contribution of immigration in the MAB to come from this two continents in the future.

From the different aspects which constitute what we call conditions of life, we consider the following ones:

- 1) The migratory history, including the legislative frame: reasons for migration, itinerary and way of financing migration, the return project and the conditions of the legal system.
- 2) The familiar characteristics. The family is a central institution for the insertion of immigrants in the society of destination: migratory chains and familiar structures

considering the links and contacts with the original family. The dimensions and composition of houses of the interviewed people; the formation and dissolution of couples and, finally, fertility and projects as regards children.

3) The networks of relation and its use in difficult situations. From which we pretend to observe networks of sociability and solidarity among foreign immigrants, in front of the native population; the neighbourhood circle and the access to different services.

4) Laboral conditions. From which we analyse the insertion of the interviewed person in the labour market: how he/she got the job, which kind of job it was, in which conditions he/she got it, the continuity of the professional trajectory and unemployment.

5) The housing conditions. The process of occupation of the house. Form of possession.

6) The perception of territory. We consider the relations of the immigrants with their physical and social environment and, especially, their mobility within the city. The use of space and the use of time.

7) Education and language. We analyse the level of education and the formative projects. Learning and usage of Spanish and Catalan languages and usage of the own language.

8) Cultural identity. We make a stand in religion as both: an area of necessities and as an element of identity. We take into account the image that immigrants have about other immigrant collectivities and about the native population. We also consider the impact of racism and xenophobia in the conditions of life of interviewed people.

The research team decided to start with the method of interviews in depth, defined as a technique to obtain information, through a professional conversation with a person. The individual transmits orally to the interviewer his personal definition of the observed situation (Ruiz Olabuénzaga, Ispizua, 1989) The global conception of the method stemmed from the hermeneutical assumptions which were exposed by Hans Georg Gadamer (1977, 82). Because of evident spacial limits, we can't largely justify the theoretical context of the methodology. Thus, we will succinctly present the different phases of the research:

1) Elaboration of the categories and the previous outline for the interviews. We elaborated a tipology of the people to be interviewed considering the following features: Origin (Magreb, Sub-Sahara and Latin-America); sex (men and women); legal situation at the moment of the interview (regular or irregular); and year of arrival at the country (more or less than five years; in other words, before or after 1989). Crossing these variables we obtained 24 categories; we interviewed 72 people, three for each category. We considered some other variables in order to widen the extent of the interviewed people, such as: age, geographical distribution, contacts, level of education, employment, zone of origin, family situation... At the same time, we interviewed some qualified informants within the immigrant collectivities, people working in the administration and in NGO or scientists

specialized in the subject, which was useful to elaborate the previous outline for the interview.

2) The interviews and their codification. The interviews were semi-structured, individual, recorded and they did guarantee anonymity. The gender of interviewers and interviewed persons was the same. After their transcription, interviews were codified for its later information processing treatment. The codification did imply a first interpretation of the obtained materials.

3) Exploitation. The exploitation consisted in a discursive treatment of the materials by the deconstruction of the autobiographical experience. In this aspect it was different from the life history method and objective. Likewise, that exploitation was based on the dimensions of the life conditions, which are enunciated above.

The aim of this paper is to expose some reflections that could be useful to delimit the indicators of the integration of migrants, stemming from the main components of the life conditions.

III. Elements of integration based on the life conditions of immigrant population.

III.1 Legislative system: from defencelessness to incertitude

One of the main checks to integration of foreign population has been legislation. In some occasions, the reasons for that have been the confusion motivated by the novelty of the phenomenon in Spain, in some other occasions the adoption of foreign models, and in some others the open opposition between the enunciated objectives and the actual application of the statutes.

While politicians and specialists are discussing about the crisis of legitimacy of the migratory policies and its consequences in the European construction as well as in the interests of the destination countries and in their relations with the countries of origin, the legal system appears to be an absolute precondition for immigrant people. In fact, the legal conditions of the alien policies will previously determine the conditions of life of the immigrant population.

In the Spanish State, the legal system is composed by the *Organic Law 7/1985 of the 1st of July, about Rights and Duties of Foreigners in Spain*, known as Alien Law, as well as the more recent *Resolution of 7th June 1991, of the Sub-secretariat, providing the Publication of the Ministerial resolution of the 7th June 1991 about regularization of Alien Workers*, (popularly called the regularization of 1991, according to Schengen resolutions of 1985 which were signed in 1991). The passing of the Alien Law coincided with the entry of Spain in the European Community,

being one of the components in the communitary integration process (Borrás, 1995). Both laws have been criticized because of its application and conception. In fact, it can be observed that the Alien Law, currently in revision, implied in occasions an unregulation of immigrant foreign workers. And that regularisation in 1991 had a perverse effect: the employment expulsion and the consequent precarisation into a clandestine situation of an important part of the immigration, independently of the time they had been in the MAB.

The legislative system has produced the opposite of the desired effect. Instead of assuring the immigrant person status and his or her activities in the country, it introduces an element of incertitude which will affect the whole life of the immigrant. His access to the labour market and housing, his perception of territory and spaces of relation and the whole immigrant project, including aspects which condition migrants' health by prolonging a state of legal defencelessness, are mediatized by the legislative system.

We must stand out that the arrival of the first effectives of immigrants coming from Africa - except the ancient Spanish colony of Guinea Ecuatorial - was motivated by harder alien laws in other countries. The political repression was the cause of the first Latin-American migrations coming from the countries in the South Cone and of the Equato-Guinean migrations. In opposition, the pioneers of the African immigration considered the MAB as a transition place. Their objective used to be France, but they lasted in the MAB because of its immigratory policy.

The characteristics of the legislative system condition the immigrants' permanence in the country and their migratory project, which can be stucked. Almost all the interviewed people had been in some occasions in a clandestine situation. The fact that they finally regularize their situation doesn't mean that they can later maintain their regularized status.

That mediatization does affect in a contradictory way the return project of immigrants. The immigrant population shows a big confusion, because of an irresolutive process pendent of legislation. Some times they suspend their return project because of harder legislative conditions. Thus, although the law was created to limit and regularize the flows of migration it has come to retain immigrants in conditions of clandestinity, with important consequences for them and for their conditions of life. Consequently, the law is correctly perceived by the immigrants as a perpetuation of their foreign status, as an instrument of exclusion, between policial and assistencial discourse.

III.2 From Family to State: Solidarity Networks

The first African and Latin-American immigrants fit to the typical image of a foreign immigrant worker: young, male, moving without their family. Dominican and Peruan immigrants, mostly women arriving alone, are the only exception. It was not until the 80s that familiar gathering increased. But, from the beginning, the family dimension is essential in the migrating process. Not only because the migration itself is usually propitiated by migratory chains which depend on familiar links, but also because the improvement of the conditions of life of the family itself or the constitution of a family are generally a central objective of migration.

In addition, the quality of life, which is defined as the degree of satisfaction in relation to the expectations generated around the migrants' conditions of life, changes considerably depending on whether it refers to an individual or to a family. The fact of having relations in the destination country does increase the expectations about conditions of life which would correspond to each family member. In the same way, the perceptions about the social environment of the migration become complex considering the individual necessities and perceptions of the different family members. The presence of the family circles allow different ways of socialization for the immigrants and diversifies the social spaces of integration.

In the same way that the migratory process can be understood by the family strategies, it has important consequences itself in the family structures. On one hand, whatever the family structure of the community of origin is, the family, as an institution, is dynamic. The migration is supported by the adaptation capacity of the family structures to the changing situations and by the mobilization of the parental links, which could be merely latent in the country of origin. On the other hand, the relation with the destination society is ambivalent: it reinforces some hierarchical structures within the family but tends to destroy some others.

We have two examples of that: the impact of family gathering normative and the relationship of the family with sanitary and scholar services. The presence in the country of different members of the family depend on the legal situation of the main person because of the legislative measures related to regrouping. Usually, the legal situation of the main person is assimilated to the situation of the husband, reinforcing conjugal dependence of wife and children in most cases (they obtain the residence licence but not the labour one). These measures are unaware that in many cases familiar regrouping, which is motivated by the desire of permanence in the country, represents not only an initial improvement in the immigrant conditions of life, but also a will to increase it through the work of the partner. Thus, phenomena which can be understood or even motivated by legislation are usually presented as the

consequence of the differential characteristics of the family environment. It's the legislation itself which limit, even dramatically, the social opening of women from Africa, who have arrived in the country by the family regrouping, "de facto" or through their regularization.

In addition, one of the most important processes consists on the statal assumption of functions which in the social-cultural context of the country of origin are still closely bound to the family. Consequently, the hierarchies established in the societies of origin suffer the biggest deterioration; particularly, the authority of the man in the family, which is reinforced and debilitated at the same time by the administration. This process manifests in the attitude of the Subsaharian women (mostly, from Senegal and Gambia) which were interviewed in relation to family planification. Being in touch with the sanitary services of the country, they can adopt in a radical way the dominant medical discourse.

The family is, especially, an institution for the biological and social reproduction. Therefore, decisions affecting the creation of the couple and reproduction are very important. Changes on these decisions must be considered the beginning of the integration and not its subordinate phenomenon. It is a vital process, based on daily life, which changes the vision of the world. For that reason, we consider it erroneous to construct the indicators of integration by the inference of the statistical series related to the family or its reproduction while changes in decisions are neglected. In many cases, these changes are motivated by the social environment of the destination country, which facilitates the adoption of behaviours which are not attainable in the country of origin environment.

Behind the familiy environment, the relationship of immigrants with their countrymen and with the natives of the destination country enclose important elements of sociability which will influence the integration of immigrants in their social environment. We must stand out the progressive rise of asociacionism in the latest years. The apogee of asociacionism manifests not only in a quantitative way but also qualitatively, helping to orientate and defend the interests of immigrants as well as providing a platform of dialogue and creating spaces of interculturality.

III. 3 Markets and territories: Job, housing and perception of territory.

We don't take into account the socio-biological theories based on the existence of social niches in a territorial level. We consider instead the answers of the interviewed people to which the access to the markets and the territorial configuration clearly appears as two aspects which are closely connected. Access to the labour market, to the housing market and to the matrimonial market, repeatedly appears to be the cause and the origin of competition between natives and immigrants. In addition, they are considered important in terms of access and delimitation of territories, even further away of territorial segregation as an expression in the space of social discrimination.

The access to the different enunciated markets is, in all cases, a limited access. In the labour market the most frequent demand refers to unqualified workers. This demand can be independent from the education characteristics of the immigrant population. The time of coincidence of immigrants and natives in the labour market is short. In fact, the foreign immigrant population has widened the reserve of workers employed in the informal sector. This sector profit of the low cost of that labour force and of the tendence to desregularization of the market. Legal insecurity push and keep the immigrant population into that segment. The main characteristic of its occupation is flexibility, which affects all the ambits: moving from an enterprise to another, from a regularized to an unregularized situation, or changing their productive sector amongst the sectors where the demand is bigger: construction, agriculture, textile and services. There is no competence either between immigrants of different origins. We have noticed that there is a specialization based on the origin, which refers to the zone of procedence (rural or urban) and to education, rather than to the continent or to the country. Thus, in agriculture most of the population is Subsaharian, while Latin-American population is absent. Immigrants from Latin-America are pricipally in the sector of services.

In opposition to the most optimistic forecasts, the described tendency doesn't seem to have a temporary nature. It is not followed by a progressive integration in other segments of the labour market, but it retains immigrants in the limit of precarization, highly dependant of the economical conjuncture. The recent forms of self-engagement, arising from the regularization of 1991, don't represent an improvement of the economical or working conditions of the interviewed people. Instead, they constitute a derivation into forms of self-explotaition, which could formaly facilitate the regularization.

The cases of competition between immigrants and natives are limited into marginal production, which is a minority production within the immigrant collectivity for the moment. The range of activities that constitute marginal production is very wide: legal jobs as the scarp iron withdrawal; criminal but semi-tolerated activities as the sale of contraband tobacco or prostitution; and pursued activities as drug traffic. Anyway these situations are still marginal, as we have said before, and they are promoted by legal insecurity itself, which has now its manifestation in the labour ambit.

Housing must be considered the second big primary necessity which constitutes the conditions of life. The first one is work. Housing depends on the working activity, not only because of the purchasing power that work offers, but also because of its location. Access to the housing market is restricted. On one hand, immigrants will occupy a sub-market, which is not very attractive for the autoctonous population, considering its material conditions, even in the context of the flagrant scarcity of houses in the whole MAB. On the other hand, the presence of foreigners gives rise to the emergency of an specific market with higher prices in relation to the prices payed for the natives for the same conditions of residence. The extreme manifestation of the segregation in the housing market is the worrying incipient apparition of barrakism in some towns of the MAB. The segregation and the ghettos would be the territorial expression of the access to the housing market.

Although the matrimonial market itself can't be compared to the rest of the markets, it usually appears to be a form of territorial restriction of the immigrant population. It's in the access to the matrimonial market and in its spaces, considering the young working class, where the discriminating attitudes are more evident. A good evidence of that is the rejection of foreign immigrant population in some spaces of diversion, especially in discoteques. The common excuse for this attitude is the fact that young foreign men could create problems because of the rivalry between them and the natives for women.

Apart this clearly racist and luckily isolated discrimination, we observe an arrangement of the territory, depending on the policial presence in it. The reference to certain quarters or, in general, quiet or transitable spaces, is a constant in the discourse of the interviewed people. That is to say that the immigrant people themselves usually limit their movement in the town to the zones where they can escape from policial pursue. In extreme cases, the movement of the immigrants is minimum, nearly inexistent, because of fear in relation to their legal situation. The difference between gender in the access to the markets and in the perception of the territory is very important. Women are in a more fragile sector within the labour market and in a worse situation in front of the law, which manifests in increasing restrictions in relation to them.

III.4 Immigration between two worlds: cultural identity

Identity is a social construct and, consequently, it is dynamic. The immigrant people are precisely the best evidence of that. They come into contact with different cultures and they have to build up their points of reference stemming from the culture of origin and having in mind the socio-cultural horizon of the culture of destination.

The perception that the interviewed people have about the other immigrant collectivities and about the native population stems from stereotypes. Stereotypes are conceptually poor and taxonomically efficient. Thus, a foreign immigrant has to redefine his or her own identity in strategical terms in front of pejorative stereotypes, which tend to associate him or her with marginality and to undervalue his/her culture of origin. The adoption of referents can be complicated. In some cases, and coinciding with the most precarious situations, the immigrant adopts, in a positive way, the cultural differentiation, which is reconstructed through the prejudices of the native population, as a form of self-affirmation. In the opposite case, the immigrant denies his/her entail to the culture of origin or he inputs negative stereotypes to the other collectivities, from a clearly classist perspective.

Finally, the relationship with the native population requires the adaptation to the existent stereotypes about that population, the Catalan one in our case. Consequently, the immigrant population doesn't create new stereotypes, but inherits the negative

and positive existent ones, mediatized by their own personal experience. In that sense, their consideration of the Catalan language, as the most evident symbol of the identity and the cultural difference in the society of destination is essential. The Catalan language is not appreciated for its value of usage, which is minimum amongst the immigrant population in study, but as an element of situation in front of that population and her identity. It has been proved amongst the interviewed people that there is an initial interest for the Catalan language. But it disappears because of the lack of facilities to learn it and because of the linguistical attitude of a part of the Catalan population. From this perspective, their attitude it is not new either; it is the continuity of the attitude of the former Spanish immigration. The linguistical attitude projected to the second generation is especially significative. The fact that their children dominate perfectly the Catalan language can be perceived as an evidence of the will and the exigency of integration, and the hope that the native population will understand it this way.

IV Elements for the analysis of the indicators of integration of immigrant population.

The reason for migration exposed by the interviewed people is the improvement of the conditions of life. It would coincide with the reasons we could find in any migrant collectivities. For most of the people, this improvement is based on the possibility to increase their economical well-being through their working situation. But they also consider the perspectives of a better education, professional activity, medico-sanitary attention or of an space of freedom (in the case of political refugees). The first check for the immigrants' integration is the legislation itself, which eliminates any horizon of future. Incertitude arising from their situation in the country stucks any process of integration or push them into marginal situations. Thus, the legislative system is a precondition for the integration process. Even though the legislative system is not enough to ensure integration, it can be enough to obstruct it.

From the analysis of the life conditions of the immigrant population from Africa and Latin-America in the MAB, we define social integration as the possible process of appropriation of ascending social spaces; in other words, as the existence of social mobility. That definition of integration, which must not be confused with economical solvency, carries the consideration of the process of economical promotion as parallel and indiscernible from the cultural appropriation process. That process must not be confused either with a process of aculturation which culminates in the assimilation of migrants.

We don't defend the developing and evolutionary thesis in which economical success is the only element to measure the level of integration. On the contrary, we support that integration must be measured through the multi-dimensional complex of the life conditions. We defend the indissociability of the mental and extra-mental, or the material and extra-material conditions of life in the definition of social integration.

On one hand, the watertight societies based on self-reproduction are usually constructed through the groupal imaginative of the immigrant population - in most cases as a repulse of the assimilation or as a refuge in front of the failure of the migratory project -. On the other hand, according to assimilationists, social ascending needs the erasing of any references of origin. Our proposal of social integration in its cultural nature lies between these two proposals and defends an intercultural definition. The product of the integration process affects not only the immigrant population, but also the whole society of destination, in its economical and cultural ambits. An economical development based on the ascending social mobility and on the cultural identity as a result of interaction, is a necessary condition of a society with capacity of integration.

In this sense, in its cultural and subjective dimension, behavioural processes of imitation of the native population are not expected. From our experience, the construction of social indicators of integration should stem from the construction of social indicators of the life conditions of the native population. And they should be tinged by indicators of quality of life, considered as the approximation to the satisfaction level within the migratory process itself. We should check both multi-dimensional systems in the immigrant population and in its descendants. The comparative social position of the descendants would be the evidence of the ascendant social mobility, of the cultural approximation and of the integration process in general.

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FOOT NOTE

¹ This paper comes from the investigation promoted by the "Metropolitan Studies Institute of Barcelona", in which the author took part. DOMINGO, Andreu; CLAPÉS, Jaume i PRATS, Maria (1995) Condicions de vida de la població immigrant d'origen africà i llatinoamericà a la Regió Metropolitana de Barcelona. Una aproximació qualitativa. Barcelona: Mancomunitat de Municipis de l'Àrea Metropolitana de Barcelona y Diputació de Barcelona.